

**Amendments to the Specification:*****Paragraph beginning on page 15, line 26***

The invention also enables the remote disconnection of one or more channels from the optical ring. An optical channel is 'disconnected' from the ring by increasing the attenuation of its corresponding attenuator ~~low~~ high enough such that the channel is effectively removed from the ring. Removing unused channels helps to reduce the associated noise and the cross talk between the channels that are in use on the ring. The ability to remove a channel remotely is realized using the ability to set the level of attenuation of the attenuators electrically.